

NEWS RELEASE



a division of the
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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The Missouri State Water Patrol, the Missouri Department of Conservation, and the Missouri Sheriff's Association have announced a new partnership in patrolling Missouri streams and rivers. Water Patrol Colonel Jerry Adams and Department of Conservation Director John Hoskins made the announcement at a press conference held at the Missouri State Water Patrol headquarters on Monday, May 19th.

The partnership program is a response to escalating concerns being expressed by families and law-abiding citizens that enjoy using Missouri's various float streams. Floaters can expect to see Water Patrol officers and Conservation agents working in teams this summer. Conservation agents will focus on their primary mission of preserving resources by enforcing the state wildlife code; Water Patrol officers will focus on their primary mission of boating safety by enforcing boating laws with an emphasis on drug and alcohol violations. Many float streams do not have permanently assigned Water Patrol officers and Conservation agents, so officers must be borrowed from other areas in order to patrol those streams. The new partnership will allow both agencies to preserve resources during this lean budget year and still provide patrols for float streams without pulling as many officers from other areas.

In addition to announcing their partnership, the Water Patrol and the Department of Conservation have created a new sign that informs boaters that the state's streams and rivers are being patrolled. The signs were created at the suggestion of the Missouri Canoe and Floaters Association. Gene Maggard is the president of the Missouri Canoe and Floaters Association and was present at the press conference to make comments and answer questions. Mr. Maggard commended the Water Patrol and Conservation Department for their proactive approach in educating floaters with the placement of the new signs. Mr. Maggard believes that more visibility by Water Patrol officers and Conservation agents will make streams safer for canoeists.

The new signs were developed to emphasize that Missouri streams and rivers are public waterways. The intention is to display the signs at canoe rental companies, public access areas, and elsewhere in an attempt to reduce illegal activities that are occurring on float streams. There is a perception among some floaters that float streams are an "oasis" away from law enforcement and they believe that "anything goes". These signs are designed to inform users that they are being monitored by law enforcement and compliance with all laws is necessary, even on float streams.

Watch the Missouri State Water Patrol homepage at www.mswp.state.mo.us for updates on Boating Safety Courses in your area.

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